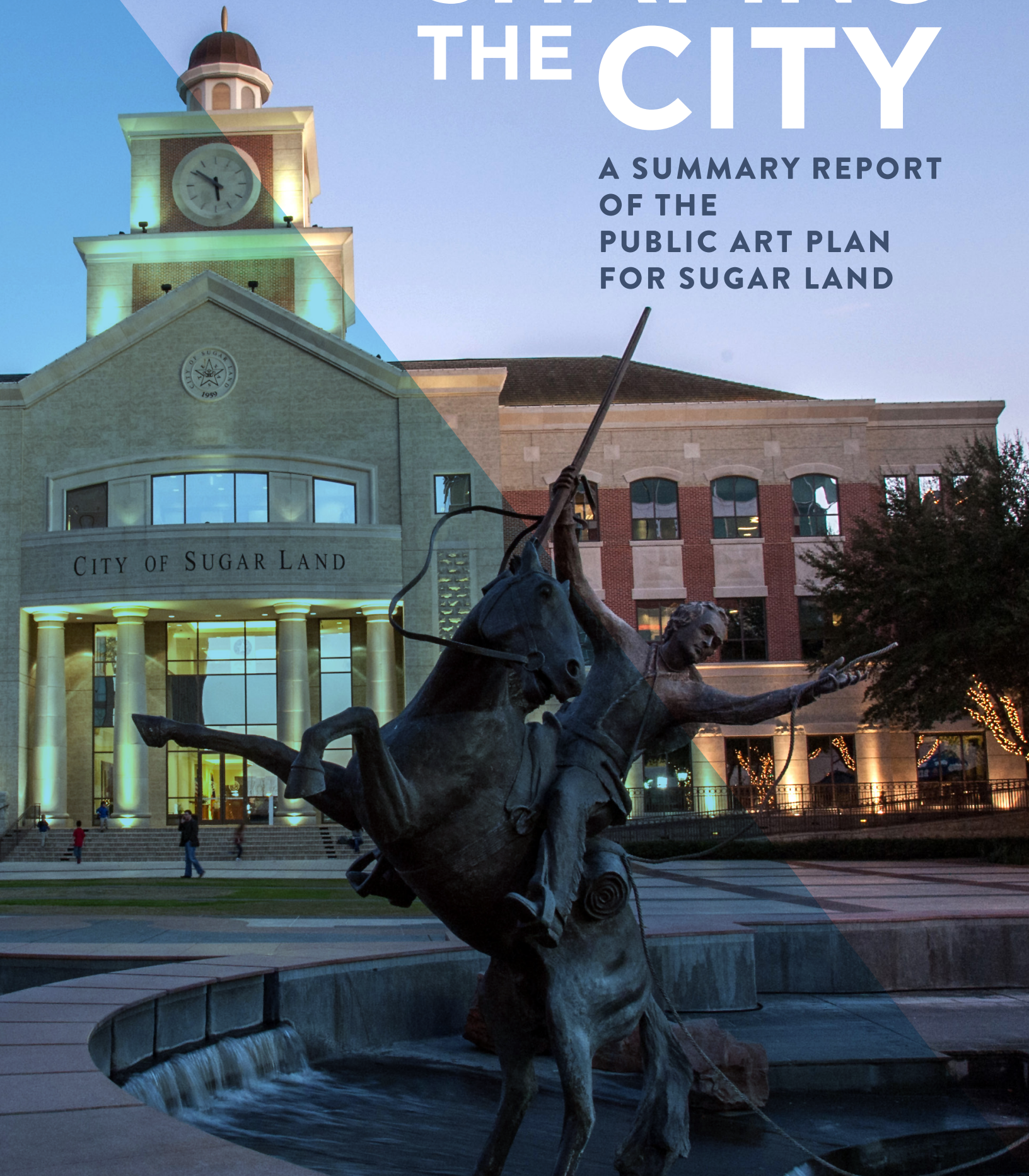


SHAPING THE CITY

A SUMMARY REPORT
OF THE
PUBLIC ART PLAN
FOR SUGAR LAND



INTRODUCTION



Sugar Land is a city with a unique history and a promising future as a regional center in the Houston metropolitan area.

Over the past 190 years, the area has evolved from a plantation to an agricultural company town to a collection of master-planned communities to a dynamic city in its own right, with a remarkably diverse population.

Sugar Land recognizes that City support of arts and culture is important to providing for the type of place that its residents, businesses and visitors seek, and to securing Sugar Land's future in a competitive economic development environment. Public art represents one of the key strategies that Sugar Land is taking to follow up on a broader set of arts and culture recommendations made in its *Vision 2025 Comprehensive Plan* (2012) and its *Cultural Arts Strategic Plan and Implementation Guide* (2014), as well as other visioning documents.

Shaping the City provides background for Sugar Land's public art initiative, outlines community priorities and identifies key opportunities. For the foreseeable future, it recommends a focus on artworks related to the city's destination activity centers, civic infrastructure projects like parks and thoroughfares, and temporary exhibitions of artwork throughout the City. It also outlines how Sugar Land can establish collaborative processes with developers and community associations to create public art.

This plan will help the City take its next step to establishing processes and building partnerships necessary for public art to thrive, and for implementing a new generation of public artworks that will capture the public's imagination, reinforce Sugar Land's commitments to public spaces, and strengthen public support for continued investments in the arts.

Image left: Historic Sugar Land

Cover image credit: Bob Pack, *Father of Texas*, Sugar Land Town Square Plaza



City Hall, Town Center

SETTING THE STAGE FOR PUBLIC ART

This is an opportune moment for the City of Sugar Land to launch a comprehensive public art program. The City, with its own resources and through partnerships, has been making steady progress on expanding its support of arts and culture activities.


- Sugar Land is changing and growing, with major destination projects, City infrastructure investments and redevelopment all in the works.
- The *Vision 2025 Guiding Principles* (2009) set the stage by recommending a goal of “Attractive, well-designed and well-maintained public buildings, streetscapes incorporating gateways, public spaces and public art throughout the city.”
- The Bernar Vernet exhibition in Oyster Creek Park (2011) demonstrated that Sugar Land residents would enjoy art exhibitions in the community.
- The Sugar Land Legacy Foundation has donated numerous statues, further demonstrating community support for art in public places.
- The *Cultural Arts Strategic Plan and Implementation Guide* (2014) reinforced the recommendation to “enliven Sugar Land’s public spaces through public art.”

- Following on the *Cultural Arts Strategic Plan*, the City created the PARCS Advisory Board by expanding the duties of an existing advisory board to include advising on arts and culture activities (2014).
- Following on the *Cultural Arts Strategic Plan*, the City hired a Cultural Arts Manager, now based in the Office of Economic Development.
- Following on the *Cultural Arts Strategic Plan*, the City has commissioned this public art plan.
- Public art is currently being considered for new public projects. The City needs a process to ensure the success of these projects.

KEY STEPS FOR SUGAR LAND

The public art plan's recommendations build on the recommendations of the *Cultural Arts Strategic Plan*, while providing more focus, depth and strategic direction. They were crafted to address Sugar Land's issues, opportunities and priorities, as surfaced in the research and engagement phase of the planning process. In addition, they reflect current standards and best practices in the field of public art and urban planning.

- Create flexible pools of funding for City-initiated public art projects, rather than a project-based percent-for-art approach. This funding should be available for costs related to both public art in capital projects and temporary exhibitions.
- Focus on near-term opportunities at the performing arts center, festival site, greenways and airport.
- Collaborate with City agencies in master planning, preliminary engineering and design processes to explore public art opportunities in future park, transportation and other projects.
- Provide seed funding for City public art projects from funds generated by sales taxes and hotel taxes.
- Establish partnerships with cultural institutions and galleries from the region and beyond to support temporary public art exhibitions.
- Provide guidelines and funding incentives for developers and community associations who would like to include public art in their projects.
- Create a standing or ad hoc work group that will advise the PARCS Advisory Board on specific artistic decisions, such as commissions, acquisitions, artist selections and de-accession.
- Revise the Capital Donations Policy to provide more specific guidance for public art and memorials.



“Public art should be beautiful and meaningful, incorporating some of the city’s heritage.”

PUBLIC ART PROJECTS GUIDE



A VISION FOR PUBLIC ART IN SUGAR LAND

Public art will beautify Sugar Land, strengthen community gathering places and build the city's reputation as an arts and culture destination.

THE MISSION OF SUGAR LAND'S PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

Sugar Land's Public Art Program will:

- Collaborate with City departments to commission new artworks,
- Organize and/or facilitate temporary exhibitions of artworks in public spaces,
- Collaborate with developers and homeowners associations to commission new artworks,
- Oversee the review process for donations of artworks and memorials,
- Promote a deeper understanding of public art, and
- Establish strategic relationships with regional arts organizations.

GOALS FOR PUBLIC ART IN SUGAR LAND

Public art in Sugar Land will:

- Create memorable, meaningful places that are focal points for civic and community life,
- Anchor activity centers,
- Create whimsy and delight in everyday places,
- Enhance the appearance of infrastructure,
- Enhance the appearance of civic facilities, and
- Reflect Sugar Land's history and heritage.

Image left: Bernar Vernet, *Three Indeterminate Lines*, 2007, exhibited in Oyster Creek Park.

DIRECTIONS FOR SUGAR LAND'S PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

There are two categories of projects that are most meaningful to Sugar Land and that should be the priority for the Public Art Program's resources: Destination Activity Center Projects and Civic Infrastructure Projects (Parks, Transportation, Water).

In each of these categories, there are several types of projects: Exhibitions / Temporary Projects, Immediate Projects and Long-Term Projects.

In addition, the City's cultural arts staff will advocate for and facilitate the consideration and inclusion of public art more broadly in planning and development. This includes master plans for City infrastructure and facilities, master-planned development, commercial and mixed-use development, and community improvement projects.

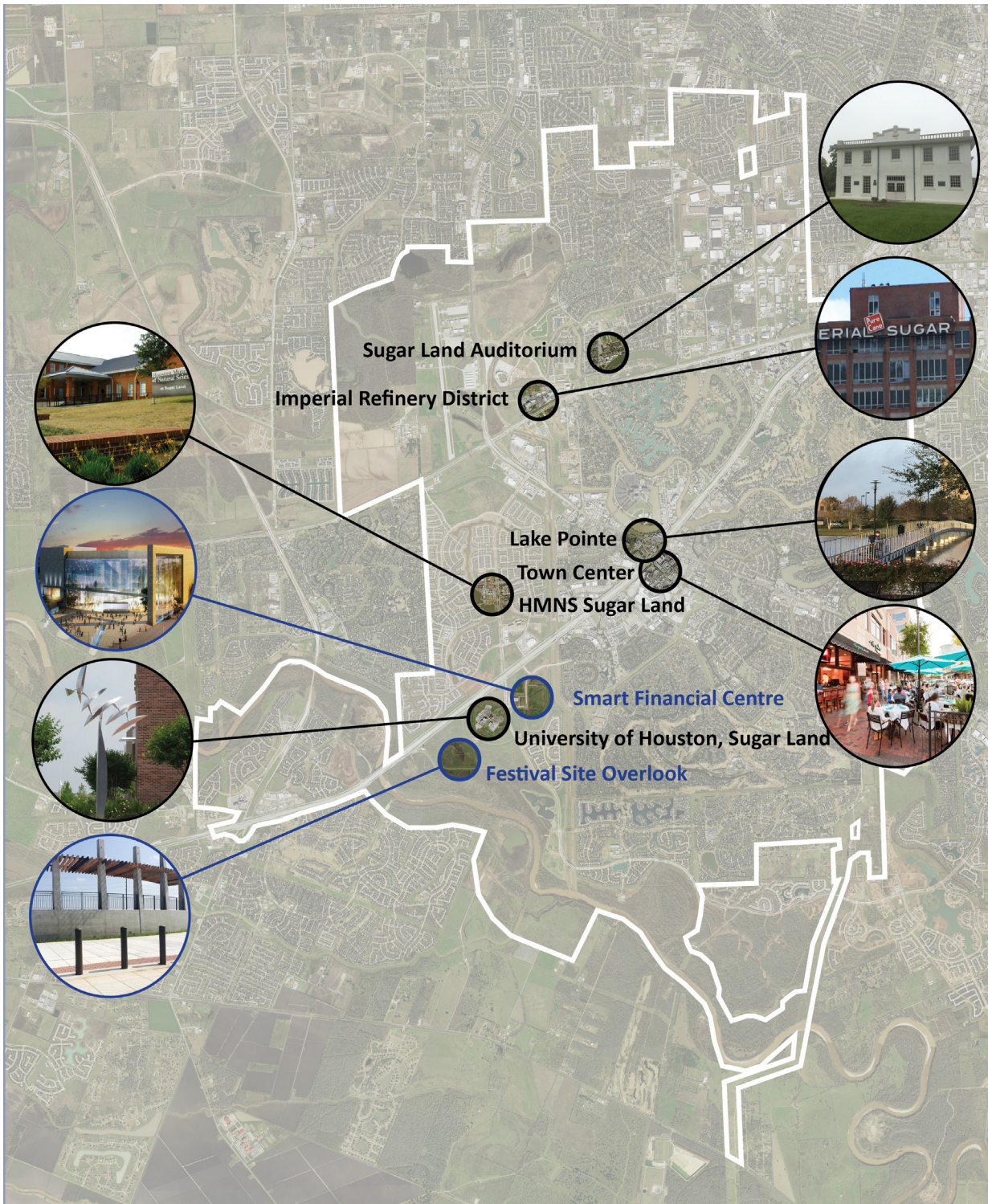
DESTINATION ACTIVITY CENTERS

Sugar Land's economic development and tourism strategies are oriented towards the development and promotion of "Destination Activity Centers" and facilities. This idea emerged a decade ago from a visioning task force charged with identifying how Sugar Land could strengthen its competitive edge, and it has been reinforced since then through numerous planning and economic development strategies. These locations include community focal points and destination areas such as Town Center, the Imperial area (Ballpark District and Refinery District), the Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land and the Brazos River Park and Festival Site.

Each Destination Activity Center is planned to include a variety of unique features, public open spaces where people can gather for community events, and pedestrian-friendly environments. All of these locations should be considered priorities for public art. As people visit these places, they should encounter significant artworks, so that over time public art will become associated with Sugar Land's identity and be an integral aspect of people's experience of the city.

An example of this idea is Father of Texas, the sculpture of Stephen F. Austin, which is the focal point of Town Square Plaza. It is the most recognizable sculpture in Sugar Land and an icon for the city. Over time, artworks of this magnitude and level of memorability should be located at each Destination Activity Center. The themes of the artworks could vary from place to place, embracing history when appropriate or reflecting contemporary regional artists in other cases.

Some Destination Activity Center projects would be built and owned by the City, others by private developers and others through partnerships with private organizations. To accomplish this, the City will pursue a variety of approaches relative to funding, commissioning and ownership of artworks.

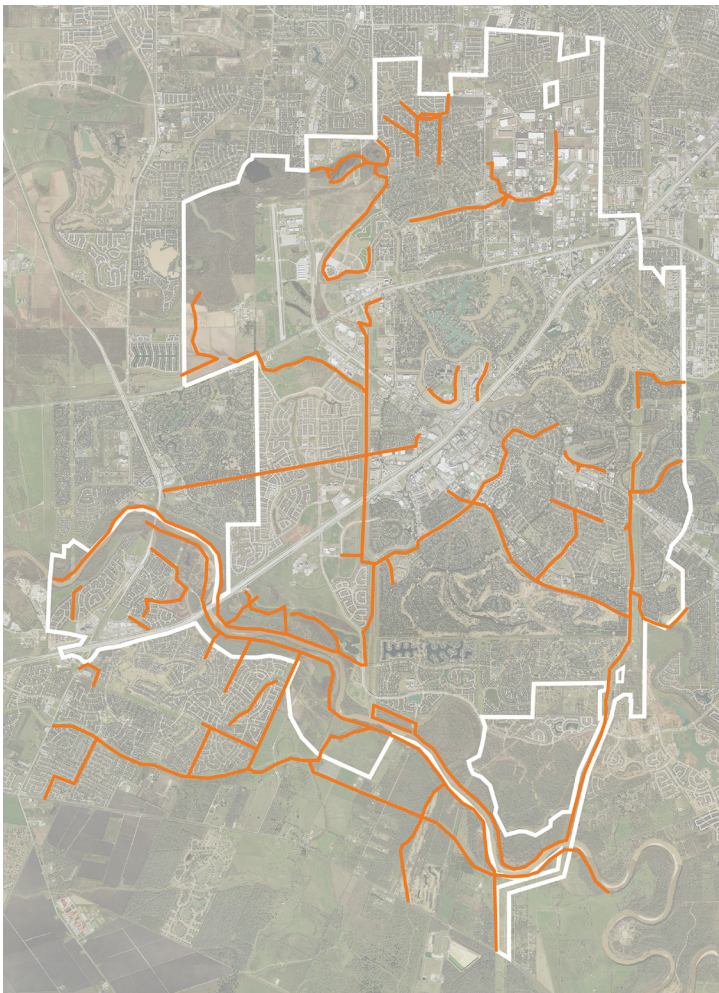


Key destinations recommended for public art. Blue indicates immediate opportunities; black indicates future opportunities.

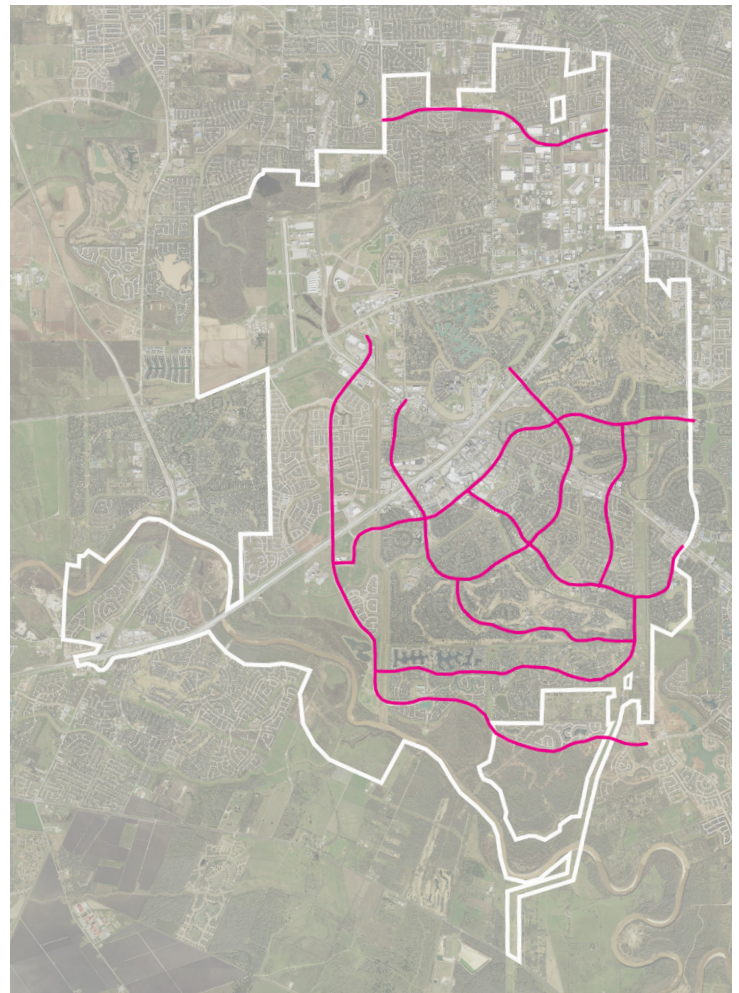
CIVIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The City of Sugar Land builds and manages several types of facilities and infrastructure for the benefit of the community — parks, recreation and trail facilities; streets and thoroughfares; systems for drinking water, water treatment, storm-water management and recycled water; and public safety facilities. It also owns a regional airport.

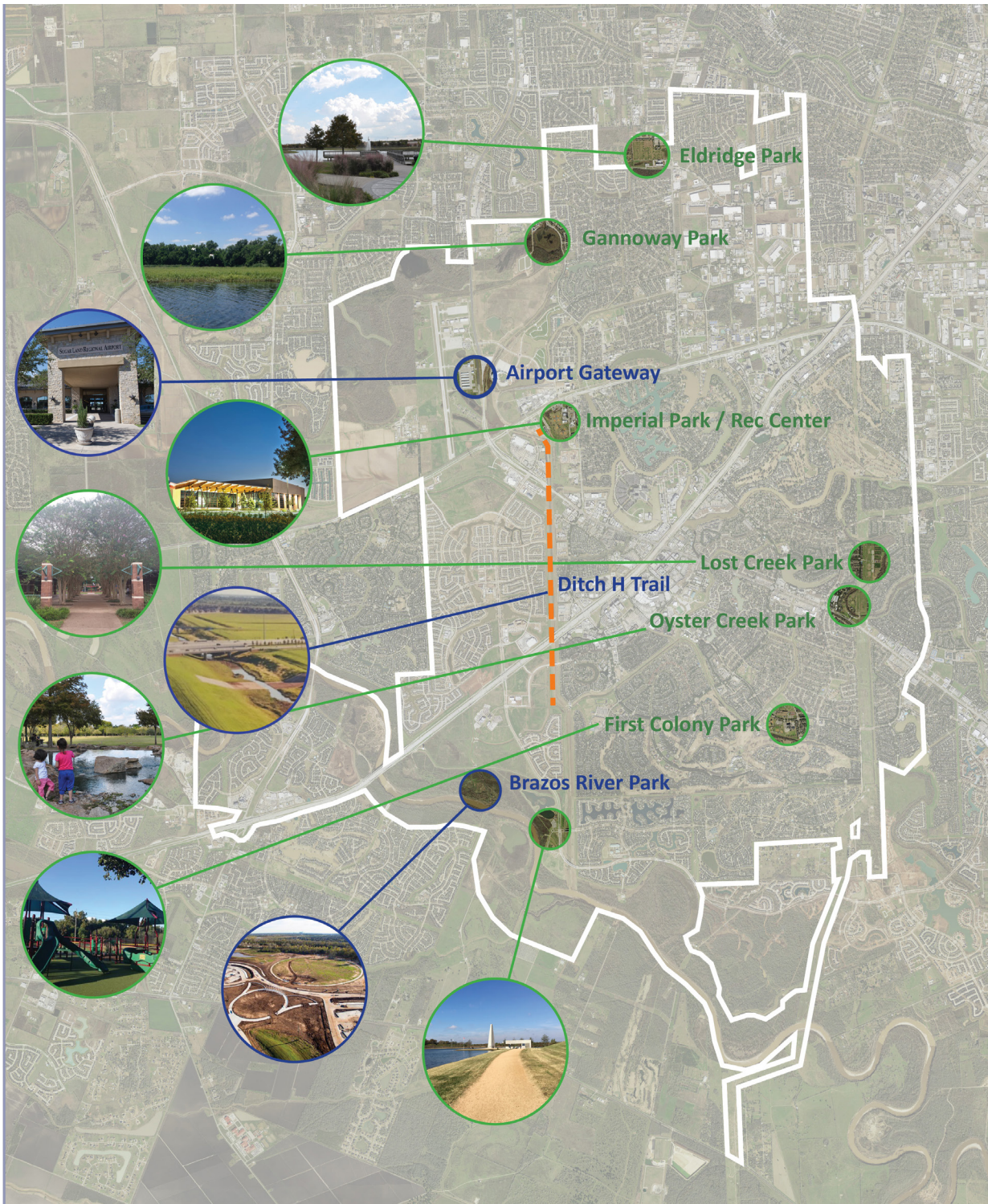
The City should carefully evaluate the possibility of incorporating public art into the facilities and infrastructure it builds, as well as adding public art to facilities and infrastructure that are already in use. This will help Sugar Land achieve one of its goals for public art – helping to make the city a more attractive and satisfying place to live – because these civic features are part of people’s experience of the city. In addition, public art can strengthen people’s attachment to the city by making Sugar Land overall a more distinctive place. Finally, experience shows that private entities would be much more willing to make commitments to public art themselves if they see the City doing so.



Existing and proposed hike-bike trails in Sugar Land



Boulevards and parkways in Sugar Land



Civic Facilities recommended for public art. Blue indicates immediate opportunities; green indicates future opportunities.



Diana Kersey, *Life Cycle of the Gulf Coast Toad*, Mulberry Bridge, San Antonio

IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM OPPORTUNITIES

In both categories above, this plan identifies both Immediate and Long-Term opportunities.

Immediate opportunities are public art proposals related to City capital projects that are in process at the time this plan was approved or are related to an upcoming special event. If public art is not considered at this time, the opportunity may be more expensive to pursue in the future or lost altogether.

Long-Term opportunities are related to projects that are planned for future years or which could be implemented any time in the future when resources are available. Even though the completion of the projects may be years in the future, planning for these projects should begin in order to achieve maximum efficiencies through coordination with partnering City agencies.



Héctor Esrawe and Ignacio Cadena, *Los Trompos*, temporary installation in Discovery Green, Houston. Photo courtesy Discovery Green

TEMPORARY ARTWORKS AND EXHIBITIONS

Temporary artworks can involve artworks that are planned to be shown only for a short period of time. They can be commissioned or borrowed from artists, galleries or cultural organizations, and are usually selected with a thought to their appropriateness for a specific location.¹ Examples range from the short-term installation of projects such as *Los Trompos* in Discovery Green to installation of borrowed sculptures in public spaces.

Temporary exhibitions can play an important role in helping Sugar Land achieve its vision for public art. Short-term displays of public art can provide people with additional reasons to visit Sugar Land or stay longer, and they can contribute to an ever-changing, creative feel that reinforces Sugar Land's identity as a distinctive, desirable place to live, work and visit.

Exhibitions will usually require a collaborative approach between the City and private entities.

Many of the locations that are appropriate for temporary public art displays are owned and managed by private entities. Funding is likely to come from a combination of the City and private sponsors and donors.

¹ Several cities, such as Pittsburgh, have published guides for developers.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR PUBLIC ART



Sugar Land's Public Art Program will encourage partnerships between City government, communities and the private sector to implement a variety of artworks in key destinations, civic infrastructure and neighborhoods throughout the city.

Sugar Land's Public Art Implementation Guide sets out the processes that the Program will follow to develop public art projects, describes the role that City leadership, City staff and citizen advisory groups will play in guiding the Program, and outlines the resources that are available for public art.

More specifically, the Implementation Guide:

- outlines the processes by which the Public Art Program will establish its annual workplan and budget, and by which it will plan for and implement projects,
- includes policies and procedures for commissioning new artworks, considering donations and removing artworks from the City's collection,
- describes the processes that can be used to select artists, and
- recommends policies for the maintenance and conservation of artworks.

Image left: Art in the Park 2015, PIAG Museum, exhibited in Oyster Creek Park.



Stacy Levy, *River Return*, San Antonio.
Image via Stacy Levy

ARTIST SELECTION PROCESSES

Selecting the right artist is one of the most important steps for ensuring a successful public art project. Sugar Land's artist selection processes should:

- Provide flexibility for the City to follow a process best suited to each specific opportunity,
- Enable the City to identify the artist who is best qualified for each specific opportunity,
- Allow for the representation of all relevant stakeholder groups,
- Ensure that the City draws on the expertise of arts professionals, and
- Conform to relevant provisions of the Texas Local Government Code.

Artist Solicitation

The first phase of an artist selection process involves recruiting artists to be considered for a project. It is always important to ensure that the best possible pool of artists is under consideration for an opportunity. Sugar Land should draw upon the following generally accepted public art best practices to recruit artists:

An open competition is a publicly-circulated call to artists in which artists are asked to submit evidence of their qualifications and interest for a specific project.

A pre-qualified artist list or a roster is list of artists that is derived from a publicly-circulated call to artists. It includes artists who are determined to have the qualifications to undertake public art projects in Sugar Land, and it is used to create smaller pools of artists who are considered for specific projects. A roster is most useful when a public art program anticipates a high volume of work.

Artist Selection

The second phase of an artist selection process involves the selection of the artist from the pool of artists generated through the solicitation process. Sugar Land should draw upon the following generally accepted public art best practices to select artists:

- For each project, the Cultural Arts Manager should form a Selection Panel that is tasked to review the pool of eligible artists and recommend a short list of finalists for the project, based on the criteria set out in the Project Plan.
- If the selection is based on an artist's qualifications, the finalists should be invited for an interview about their interest in and approach to the project.
- If the selection is based on a Concept Proposal, the finalists should be given a Request for Proposals to develop a concept for the artwork they would create and a small contract to compensate them for their services. The proposal would include a discussion of materials and fabrication techniques, expectations regarding site infrastructure needs, a preliminary budget, a timeline and other aspects of the project that are relevant to the decision-making process and outlined in the RFP.



Brad Goldberg, *Water Table*, Dallas.
Survey respondents chose this as one of six images most representative of the public art they would like to see in Sugar Land.
Photo courtesy Brad Goldberg.

- The Selection Panel would make a recommendation to the PARCS Board or City Management based on its review of the concepts and the artists' presentation, as well as an artist's credentials and reference checks, using criteria set out in the Project Plan.
- In certain, rare, circumstances the Public Art Program can select an artist through a Direct Selection process. In a Direct Selection process, one artist is recommended by the Cultural Arts Staff or a curatorial consultant based on that artist's unique qualifications for a particular project.

Selection Panels

Selection Panels should be organized to balance the voices of stakeholders, citizens and arts professionals. To ensure that the fullest range of Sugar Land residents have the ability to serve on Selection Panels, residents should be encouraged to register through the City's resident involvement web site.

Recruiting Artists from Sugar Land and the Region

The City's Public Art Program should make every effort to recruit artists from Sugar Land, Fort Bend County and the Houston region when possible. The program can take several steps to enhance recruitment from city, county and regional artists.

- Create a mailing list for RFQs, so that all interested artists can be certain that they will be informed of all opportunities. Also circulate RFQs through mailing lists of Sugar Land and Fort Bend County arts organizations.
- When possible, organize public art projects that provide opportunities for artists who are not seasoned public artists. This can be done by preselecting fabricators, contracting artists for design services, and providing professional facilitation of the fabrication and installation phases.
- When national calls are issued and the public art scopes and services exceed \$150,000, reserve additional funds for emerging public artists from the city or the region to apprentice with the artists who are selected, when possible.



Rolando Briseno, *Celestial Bodies*,
Frisco, Tex., convention center garage.
Courtesy Via Partnership.

FUNDING

Funding for public art in Sugar Land will come from a range of public and private sources.

General Fund

Sugar Land's General Fund supports the administrative costs of the Cultural Arts Program.

Sugar Land 4B (SL4B)

The Sugar Land 4B Corporation was established to promote, assist and enhance economic development and quality of life opportunities within the City. Its activities are funded through sales tax revenues dedicated to this purpose, and the types of projects it can take on are set out by state law.⁶ SL4B funding should be considered for City-sponsored public art projects related to both civic infrastructure and Destination Activity Centers. SL4B funding should also be considered a source of funding for public art enhancements related to infrastructure and public realm improvements provided by developers.

Hotel Occupancy Tax

The Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) can be a source of revenue for public art projects that enhance Sugar Land's attractiveness as a destination for overnight

visitors. It is funded through a sales tax paid by people staying in hotels in Sugar Land. State law allows cities to dedicate up to 15% of HOT revenues for arts and culture purposes.⁷ Sugar Land has used HOT revenues to fund the Cultural Arts Strategic Plan, the Public Art Plan and some project funding in FY16. The City should continue to dedicate a portion of any increases in HOT revenues to arts and culture activities, primarily public art. Funds from the HOT would be dedicated specifically to public art that supports that component of its economic development strategies that relate to Destination Activity Centers, as well as other arts and culture activities that attract visitors.

Tax-Increment Reinvestment Zone

A Tax-Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) is a financing tool that allocates tax revenue generated on new private sector development within the TIRZ to pay for the public improvements needed to make that new development possible. TIRZ funds can be used for many uses, including “capital costs, including the actual costs of the acquisition and construction of public works, public improvements, new buildings, structures, and fixtures.”

Sugar Land has two active TIRZ zones. The projects that are being funded by these zones do not specifically include public art. However, they include many types of infrastructure into which public art could be incorporated, such as plazas, trails, bridges, pedestrian bridges and parking garages. As project budgets and expenditures are finalized, the City should consider whether TIRZ funds can be used to support public art in these infrastructure elements.

If the City creates any new TIRZ districts, it should require that TIRZ funding be used for incorporating public art into infrastructure and other public elements.

Sugar Land 4B Joint CIP Program

The Sugar Land 4B Joint CIP Program provides matching funds for public improvement projects initiated by community associations. The grantee must pay for at least half the cost of the project. The Sugar Land 4B Corporation should be asked to revise its guidelines to allow community associations to apply for Sugar Land 4B Joint CIP Program funding for public art projects.

Tax Abatement

Sugar Land offers a tax abatement for investment in new commercial and industrial development and a specialized tax abatement for commercial and industrial developments that invest in LEED-certified design and construction. Sugar Land should offer a similar tax abatement to businesses that invest in public art. As with the LEED abatement, businesses should be given a tax abatement on a portion of their investment that is spent on public art.

This abatement should be available to any business that would otherwise be eligible for tax abatements. In the future, consideration should be given to extending this tax abatement (as allowable by state law) to commercial or mixed-used developments in areas designated as regional or neighborhood centers in the Sugar Land general plan, as these are envisioned as walkable urban centers, and the inclusion of public art would support that policy goal.

Sugar Land Legacy Foundation

The Sugar Land Legacy Foundation can be a vehicle for managing sponsorships or mounting dedicated campaigns for special public art initiatives that are identified as priorities but for which City funding is not available. The Foundation's recent strategic plan calls for identifying community projects proactively, establishing funds to support them, organizing campaigns to raise the money, and building a pool of sustainable or ongoing donors. Several projects recommended in this Plan could be appropriate as SLLF strategic fundraising opportunities.

Corporate Sponsorships

The City should pursue corporate sponsorships to support the Public Art Program. Sponsorships would be best suited for temporary exhibitions, a location for rotating temporary artwork, or major commissions or acquisitions at Destination Activity Centers. Projects funded through sponsorships should follow the appropriate processes outlined in the Policies and Procedures section of this plan.

Donations

Donations of artworks can be a useful way of building the City's public art collection and serving the community. Indeed, most of the public art view in Sugar Land has been provided by the generosity of its residents and businesses.

Each donation proposal should be considered carefully in light of the City's overall goals and expectations for public art, to ensure that public spaces and other City resources are used as wisely as possible.

The procedure for accepting donations of artworks (permanent and long-term loans) are designed to:

- Ensure that donated artworks are in keeping with the City's overall goals for public spaces.
- Ensure that donated artworks are in keeping the Public Art Program's vision and goals for its collection, and its expectations for the quality of the artworks in the public realm.
- Ensure that donated artworks are sited appropriately in terms of media, scale, site usage and aesthetics.
- Address technical concerns and costs such as installation, lighting, insurance, easements, ongoing maintenance, conservation and safety.
- Determine whether it is appropriate for the City to contribute resources to the donation.

Review Process

Internal Review of proposals shall be coordinated by the Cultural Arts Manager, in consultation with other relevant City departments, to ensure that the application is complete and to conduct an initial feasibility review of the proposal. Other relevant departments include the department that would host the artwork, the Director of Finance and the City Management, as described in the City's Capital Donations Policy.¹² City staff may impose conditions on the acceptance of the donation.

Once the Internal Review is complete and City staff determines that the proposal is feasible, there will be two further reviews.

- The PARCS Advisory Board shall conduct an aesthetic review of the proposal. For commemorative or memorial artworks, the PARCS Advisory Board will also conduct a review of the appropriateness of the subject matter of the proposal.
- The Sugar Land Legacy Foundation shall conduct a review of the proposal. The Foundation shall evaluate proposals in regard to ensure they meet the donation conditions outlined below, as well as any other conditions made by the City staff.

The recommendations of the staff, the PARCS Advisory Board and the Sugar Land Legacy Foundation shall be forwarded to the City Council, which will make a final determination on the acceptance of the donation.¹

Conditions of Approval

The City shall accept gifts of art or loaned art only when:

- The donor is able to provide funding for all costs related to siting the art, as well as an maintenance endowment for the artwork,
- The donation is accompanied by an appropriate warranty of originality and a legal instrument of conveyance of title (or similar acceptable documentation), enumerating any conditions of the gift or return to the donor for the gift or loan, and maintenance protocols and material inventory,
- The donation meets all other aspects of these guidelines, and
- The donation meets any other conditions required by City staff.

City staff, the PARCS Advisory Board, the Sugar Land Legacy Foundation and the Council can place additional conditions on donations.



Texan/French Alliance for the Arts
“Open The Door” art display, 2015,
Oyster Creek Park.

¹ The legislative history of 4B sales taxes is discussed in *Texas Municipal League Economic Development Handbook* (Austin, 2015), pp. 1-2. Eligible projects are discussed at pp. 3-4.

RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

Project	Destination Activity Center	Civic Infrastructure	Exhibition Site	City Funding	Sponsorship Opportunity	Donation Opportunity	Private Development
Smart Financial Centre Interior	●			●	●	●	
Smart Financial Centre Plaza	●		●	●	●	●	
Festival Site Overlook	●	●		●	●	●	
Brazos River Park	●	●		●			
Imperial Refinery District	●		●				●
HMNS	●		●	●		●	
Sugar Land Auditorium	●			●		●	
Airport Gateway		●		●		●	
City Hall Atrium		●		●			
Ditch H Trail		●		●			
Hike-Bike Trail		●		●			
Oyster Creek Park		●	●	●			
First Colony Park		●	●	●			

Project	Destination Activity Center	Civic Infrastructure	Exhibition Site	City Funding	Sponsorship Opportunity	Donation Opportunity	Private Development
Lost Creek Park		●	●	●			
Eldridge Park		●	●	●			
Imperial Park		●	●	●			
Imperial Recreation Center		●		●			
Bridges		●		●			
Roundabouts		●		●			
Water				●			
Arts Facility		●		●			
Town Center			●		●		
Lake Pointe			●		●		
Cullinan Park			●		●		
Imperial Village Center			●				●
Imperial Infrastructure							●
New corporate, retail, mixed-use developments							●

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Joe Zimmerman, Mayor
Himeshi Gandhi
Mary Joyce
Steve R. Porter
Bridget Yeung
Amy Mitchell
Harish Jajoo

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Chris Steubing, Engineering
Robert Valenzuela, Public Works
Phil Wagner, Economic Development

INTERVIEWS

Adrienne Barker, Houston Museum of Natural Science
at Sugar Land
Cindy Dees, Sugar Land Legacy Foundation
Michael Guidry, University of Houston
Dr. Suleman Lalani, Aga Khan Foundation
Wende Lewis, Planned Community Developers, Ltd.
Dennis Parmer, Sugar Land Heritage Foundation
Omar Samji, Aga Khan Council
James Thompson, former Mayor

HOUSTON AND SUGAR LAND ARTISTS

Thank you to the many Houston-based artists and
Sugar Land area artists that participated in our
Artist Roundtable discussions.

PROJECT MANAGER

Lindsay Davis, Cultural Arts Manager

CONSULTANTS

Todd W. Bressi, Urban Design • Place Planning • Public Art
Meridith McKinley, Via Partnership



Shaping the City: A Public Art Plan for Sugar Land
Cultural Arts Program
City of Sugar Land, Economic Development
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